

South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance, [including a video on how to fill out EqIAs](#), is available on Insite or you can contact the Policy and Performance Team.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Uzma Ali
- 1.2 Team and Service:
Housing Strategy
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
Communications Charter
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
25/07/2024
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
25/09/2024
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
Uzma Ali

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Choose an item.
If other, please specify
Communications Charter
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
New
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
Click or tap to enter a date.

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

The Communications Charter has been produced in response to the results of the tenant and leaseholder satisfaction surveys. Communication was highlighted as an area for service improvement in both the 2022 and 2023 surveys. The 2022 survey results in response to the question about satisfaction in relation to the landlord listening to tenants views and acting upon them, had a 51% satisfaction this was below the benchmark figure for all other comparable organisations in that group. This result improved in the most recent survey, which was conducted in 2023, the satisfaction rating was at 54%, however this was still below the benchmark figure which was between 55% -61%. Both sets of survey results clearly show that there is some work to be done to improve communications, hence looking at a communications standard to provide clarity and consistency to all our tenants and leaseholders. The charter also aligns with the focus of the new consumer standards for social housing tenants, which was introduced by government to ensure greater scrutiny and regulation on social landlords and their communications with tenants and leaseholders. The Social Housing Regulation Act which came into effect from the 1st April 2024, introduced new consumer standards to ensure greater regulation of social housing landlords. The standards included the following:

- Be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect
- Listen to tenants complaints and respond promptly to put things right

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users
- Councillors
- External Stakeholders
- Other
- Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

The Communications Charter will be for all tenants and leaseholders of South Cambridgeshire District Councils Housing Service. The tenants and leaseholders are all individuals who may identify under one of the different protected characteristics.

2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards? (Max 250 words)

N/A

Section 3: Evidence and Data

3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups?](#) Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous

versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.

(Max 250 words)

A focus group was held with tenants and leaseholder representatives on the 30th April 2024 to discuss the proposal and invite feedback, critique and comments from tenant and leaseholder representatives. Subsequently, the Housing Engagement Board consisting of elected tenant and leaseholder representatives, housing managers and councillors, chaired by the lead councillor for housing gave their approval of the Communications Charter.

3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

N/A

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: Positive - Low

Age



Details: The impact on age is neutral as there is an option to use different methods of communication within the Communication Charter. The data gathered around age and preferences of communications in the tenant and leaseholder survey 2023/2024 show that whilst the preferred method of communication overall was post, residents aged between 45 -54 years are less likely to want a letter via post. Email is more favoured amongst the 25 -54 years group with the highest preference in this age group for emails from the 25-34 years age range. With only 26% preference for emails in the 75-84 years group and only 11% preference in the 85+ age range.

Disability

Details: Positive – information can be provide In other formats eg Braille. This need is identified from the information gathered when a tenant is housed by the housing department. Tenant information is stored on the councils orchard housing ICT system and information around disability and needs etc are flagged up so that staff members are alerted to this information when contacting/ communicating with tenants.

Gender reassignment

Details: Low/No Impact

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: Neutral

Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Neutral – Low/ No Impact

Race

Details: Positive – Information can be provided in other languages. This need is identified when a tenant is housed by the housing service, all of the information relating to the tenants needs is detailed in the tenants profile which is stored on the councils Orchard ICT system.

Religion and belief

Details: Neutral – Low/No Impact

Sex

Details: Neutral – Low/No Impact



Sexual orientation

Details Neutral – Low/No Impact

None of the above

4.2 Other characteristics

Some characteristics are not yet protected in law, but the Council has made declarations it will consider them in policy making.

Digital inclusion ([what is this?](#))

Details: Positive – Tenants can contact the council by phone, posted letter, email and by completing online forms as well as requesting visits to the council to meet officers in person and asking for a visit from a housing officer. This allows tenants the choice of how they wish to communicate with the housing service and this is not just limited to digital and online forms of communication.

Care experience ([what is this?](#))

Details: Neutral – Low/No Impact

Rurality

Details Positive

Socio-economic

Details Neutral – Low/No Impact

4.3 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Once approved the Communications Charter will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders. It will also be published in the tenant and leaseholder newsletter as well as being posted on the website.	Uzma Ali September/October 2024

UPDATE – The Communications Charter was approved by Cabinet on the 24 th September 2024. The Communications Charter was sent out to all tenants and leaseholders in December 2024.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4.4 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

The Communications Charter has been developed to improve communications for all tenants and leaseholders. The Charter clearly states the response times for staff when responding to all tenant and leaseholder enquiries with the housing service. The effectiveness of the Charter will be measured by annual tenant and leaseholder satisfaction surveys. It is hoped that the Charter will improve tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the communication process, which has scored poorly in the last two surveys carried out in 2022 and 2023.

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to



proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The Communications Charter has positive equality considerations and will not negatively impact on tenants. The Communications Charter provides a number of different communication methods for tenants to contact the council. Those with protected characteristics are not negatively impacted by the Charter. Disabled tenants can have information in other formats, eg Braille. Those tenants who do not speak English, can have information translated into other languages.

The information that the housing service has about its tenants, collected from the housing application forms the tenant profile information, this ensures that housing officers and staff are aware of the communication needs of the tenants. The Communications Charter also provides different methods of communications for tenants who for example may prefer to communicate by email. The Tenant and Leaseholder survey identified that those in the 25-54 age bracket prefer communicating by email. The Communications charter will not negatively impact on tenants from different age brackets. In conclusion the Communications Charter offers a number of options to communicate with the council this includes, post, email, telephone, in person visits. Information can be translated into other languages and formats for those who require this. This will allow all tenants to be able to communicate with the council. And the EQiA has concluded that no tenants will be negatively impacted as a result of the Communications Charter and it is in fact a very important document in setting out and providing information on all the methods of communication available to tenants depending on their preference and needs.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Uzma Ali

6.2 Date of completion:

01/08/2024

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

01/08/2027

6.4 Approving officer signature *, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Julie Fletcher – Line Manager and Project Sponsor

6.5 Date of approval:

01/08/2024

Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.

**in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*